TEACHER GUIDE TO THE

# ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER


## Included in this Packet:



**Copies of these documents will be printed for you and handed out at PRM.*

PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM

HOW TO USE THIS TEACHER GUIDE TO THE

# ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER & HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

**Please read through this document at least once before arriving at the museum for your field trip.**

The information found in this guide (on page 3) is intended to provide you, the teacher, with background information and a general plan for your gallery experience.

We will provide you with a copy of this Teacher's Guide upon your arrival at the museum for use during your time in the gallery, so you don't need to bring your own copy.

You are encouraged to adjust or change the elements outlined in this guide to best suit your class' needs. The main objective of your time in the gallery is to reinforce your curriculum goals related to animal classifications.

Please **do not** plan on reading this guide aloud to your students verbatim, but rather, become comfortable with the material and then present it to your class at their learning level.

You will receive copies of the student worksheet (pages 5-6), as well as the Holocaust Survivor Story (pages 9-10) upon arrival at the museum, so don't bring your own copies.

If you have questions, feel free to contact:

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TEACHER GUIDE TO THE

# ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER—KANKAKEE TORRENT

**Before walking in the Gallery, please remind your students of the following:**

How should we behave when we're inside the gallery?

1. Walk.
2. Use inside voices.
3. You are allowed to touch the exhibits in this gallery, but make sure that you are being gentle and respectful.

**As you enter the Illinois River Encounter gallery, begin a discussion with your students.** You could start by saying something similar to the following:

This exhibit is called the Illinois River Encounter. Can anyone guess what we will see inside this gallery?

Answer: *This gallery explores the relationship between people and the Illinois River. This museum actually sits on the banks of the river (you can see the Illinois River from the windows in the main lobby). Many people made their homes by the river because it provided a source of food, water, protection, and trade. In the gallery, you will get to learn about the different types of people that have called this area their home throughout history, and about the animals that lived here as well. As we walk around, you should pay special attention to the animals and their habitats.*

What was the Kankakee Torrent?

*The Kankakee Torrent was a catastrophic flood that occurred between 14,000 and 18,000 years ago in the Midwestern United States. It resulted from a breach of a large glacial lake formed by the melting of the Wisconsin Glacier. The landscape south of Chicago still shows the effects of the torrent, particularly at Kankakee River State Park and on the Illinois River at Starved Rock State Park..*

How does moving water impact the geologic features of the Earth's surface?*

1. Weathering: rocks and minerals are broken down into smaller and smaller pieces.
2. Erosion: the transportation of weathered, or broken down, materials; both water and wind can carry these materials down stream or down wind.
3. Deposition: sediment, and broken down substances are deposited, or laid down somewhere.

**If you haven't covered this in class yet, you can go over the information for the first time; students will have copies of the information on their worksheets.*

TEACHER GUIDE TO THE

# ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER

As we walk through the gallery, work with your peers to complete the worksheet. Some of the answers can be found by reading the labels here in the gallery, and other questions require you to interact with the exhibits. The backside of your worksheet can only be completed once you have had the opportunity to work with the museum's stream table. Our group will take turns in the Stream Table. Be sure to listen for your chaperone to tell you when it is your turn.

**You may now guide your students through the exhibit, or allow them to move freely in their chaperone groups.**

**Most of the answers to the Kankakee Torrent questions are found in the first alcove of the gallery; this area can only hold 5-7 students at a time. Please help monitor this area and keep it from becoming overcrowded.**

Name: _____

# CREATING THE ILLINOIS RIVER VALLEY

The gallery you are in is called the Illinois River Encounter gallery. This room explores the relationship between people and the Illinois River. As you walk through the gallery, be on the lookout for the answers to the questions below. Some answers will be found by reading the labels in the gallery, while other answers can be found by interacting with the exhibits. You will complete the backside of this worksheet while working with the Stream Table in the River Science Lab

## KANKAKEE TORRENT

When was the Kankakee Torrent and what was it?

_____

_____

_____

What are armored till balls?

_____

_____

What was the result of the Kankakee Torrent? List two things that were created by the torrent or impacted by it:

_____

_____

Write down something new about the Kankakee Torrent that you learned today:

_____

_____

How deep is the Illinois River today? Is it deeper or shallower than it was in the past?

_____

In your own words, explain how locks and dams help boats and barges move along the river?

_____

_____

_____

# CREATING THE ILLINOIS RIVER VALLEY

The following questions should only be filled out once you have participated in the Stream Table demonstration located in the River Science Lab.

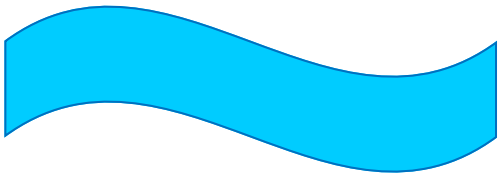
## STREAM TABLE

What did you notice about the stream table itself? Describe what you saw:

Where does water move faster when it flows around a curve? Where does soil get deposited and where does it get eroded around a curve? Draw arrows from the statements to the correct places along the curves of the river below..

Water moves faster here.

Water moves slower here.



Soil is eroded from here.

Soil is deposited here.

What happens to pollution spilled near a river?

Does the water all stay in the path of the river? Where else does the water go?

What was something new you learned today, or what was something you thought was interesting?

TEACHER GUIDE TO THE

# PEORIA HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL


**Before visiting the memorial site, please remind your students of the following etiquette:**

1. Walk.
2. Use inside voices.
3. Be respectful of the people and things around you.

**As you approach the Peoria Holocaust Memorial, begin a discussion with your students.** You could start by saying something similar to the following:

We are visiting the Peoria Holocaust Memorial. Can anyone tell me what the Holocaust was?

> Answer: *The Holocaust is one of the most terrible events in human history. It occurred during World War II when Hitler was leader of Germany. Six million Jewish people were murdered by the Nazis. This included as many as 1 million Jewish children. Millions of other people that Hitler didn't like were killed as well. This included Polish people, Catholics, Serbs, and handicapped people.*
>
> *Holocaust is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.*
>
> *During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.*

Why does Peoria have a Holocaust Memorial? Why should we study the Holocaust and visit the memorial?

> Answer: *We have a Holocaust Memorial because no part of the world was left untouched by the atrocities of the Holocaust. We must continue to study the Holocaust and visit the sites of memorials so that we never forget what happened, and so that we can work hard to make sure nothing like it ever happens again.*


**At the beginning of the memorial, pause with your students to explain to them what they are going to see:**

1. Each pillar that you see is filled with buttons. Each button represents the life of a Jewish person who was murdered during the Holocaust. In these 18 pillars, there are 6 million buttons.
2. These 18 pillars are in the shape of the star of David; 18 is a significant number in judaisim as the word for "18" is chai or "life." The star of David was made to be worn as a identifying patch on the arms of all Jews.
3. The two rows of pillars, one on each side of the walk-way are meant to symbolize the oncentration camp selection process; which indicated whether a person would live to work in the camp or be killed upon arrival.
4. You'll notice that the columns descend (get shorter) as you walk through, symbolizing the descent of humanity into chaos and evil under the reign of the Nazis.
5. Finally, the five triangles filled with buttons at the end of the memorial are meant to symbolize the 5 million "enemies of the state" who were also murdered, including political and religious leaders, Roma gypsies, Serbians, Catholics, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, the trade unionists, alcoholics and the handicapped. Just as Jews were made to wear star of David patches, enemies of the state had to wear different colored triangle patches according to which category of "enemy" they were deemed to be a part of.

**Allow your students to walk through the memorial, and give them time to ask questions.** As a culminating activity, you have the option of reading the survivor story found on pages 9-10 aloud to your class before leaving the memorial.

**Martin Kapel was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1930.** As the son of Polish parents Martin was legally classed as a Polish citizen by the nationality laws of both Poland and Germany. This fact was to become significant in Martin's story.

Martin's father had left Poland as a young man to go to Germany. His mother's parents likewise left Poland with their young family to do the same, settling in Nuremberg before moving to Strasbourg in France in about 1923. Martin's parents met in Strasbourg and were married in France. They later moved back to Germany, settling in Leipzig where Martin and his sister were born.

Martin was brought up in an orthodox Jewish household. His grandparents on both sides were Hasidic Jews. His parents did not follow such extreme orthodoxy but nonetheless practiced the Jewish faith. The family did not live in the Jewish area of Leipzig; instead they lived in a working class area of the city. They were not well off, particularly after Martin's father died when he was five years old.

Martin began going to school shortly before his sixth birthday. By this time the Nazis were already in power and Martin recalls the Nazi propaganda that formed part of his education, particularly the Fahnenehrung (honouring the flag) celebration that took place several times each term. However, his teacher was not deliberately unkind to Martin despite having to teach Nazi propaganda.

Martin remembers the impact of anti-Jewish legislation during the 1930s and particularly recalls seeing and hearing Nazi propaganda. The main change for him came in 1938 when Jewish children were no longer allowed to go to non-Jewish schools. Martin had to leave school and instead go to a Jewish school, which was a long way from his home and very overcrowded as it had had to take children from all over the city. He recalls the atmosphere of fear and nervousness among both staff and pupils and the difficulty of the long journey to school.

One morning in 1938 Martin and his family were asleep in their beds when there was a knock at the door. When his mother answered it, Nazis walked in and the family were told to dress quickly and go with them. They were only allowed to take what they could grab on the spur of the moment and were watched carefully to ensure they didn't try to take any valuables. They were taken to a small police station a few streets away and were told to wait, not knowing what was going to happen. Eventually a bus arrived - a rare sight in Leipzig, where public transport was normally by tram - and they got on the bus and were taken to a railway station to join a large crowd of people. Everyone was put on board a train, and again were not told where they were being taken. At a station a short distance into the journey some of the passengers realised they were locked in and could not open the train door from the inside. SS men and German police on the platform threatened to shoot anyone who tried to escape.

The train stopped at various stations to pick up more passengers. Some of them worked out that the train was travelling eastwards but that was all they knew about where they were going. Eventually, after dark, the train arrived at a small railway station and everyone was ordered to get off. The prisoners were formed into rows, with an SS man at the end of each row, and marched off past a small town and into a forest. Martin describes the wide range of people - young children, elderly people, those carrying babies and those who had been taken from hospital beds - and the difficulty of marching through the forest at night. He was grateful to have been taken with his mother and sister as one family, as some of the other people had been taken from school or the workplace and had no idea where other members of their family were.

Eventually the column was stopped beside a railway line. The people were told that the SS men would go no further but that they should continue and walk along the railway line between the rails. They walked for hours in the dark along the railway line, with a number of people tripping and being trampled by those behind who couldn't see where they were going. Eventually they saw some lights to their left and walked across a ploughed field to a small hamlet. After a few hours some Polish police and soldiers arrived and they realised that they were in Poland. The expulsion had been carried out in secret by the Germans so the Polish authorities had no idea that it was happening. The incident became known as the 'Polenaktion'.

Martin and his mother and sister managed to get away amid the general chaos and eventually made their way to some relations in Krakow, who knew nothing of their coming. They stayed with their relatives until they were able to find somewhere else to stay and were in Krakow for about eight months. They were welcomed by their relatives but not by the Polish authorities, who considered them to be illegal immigrants despite the fact that they had been expelled from Germany by force. Martin also recalls the high level of resentment and anti-Semitism in Poland that meant they had to stay within the Jewish area of Krakow.

After eight months in Krakow Martin and his family went to stay with other relatives in a small village (stetl) called Brzesko. His relatives there lived a completely Hasidic way of life. One member of the family earned a living for the whole family while the other members devoted their lives to religious study and observance. One of Martin's uncles was a Dayan, a judge for the community who was responsible for adjudicating in disputes between individuals or families and for determining whether or not meat should be considered kosher. The village was primitive and extremely poor with no gas or water supply, though it did have electricity for lighting thanks to the generator at the nearby brewery. Martin feels privileged to have experienced this way of life in Poland, as it was completely extinguished by the Holocaust.

Martin's mother managed to get Martin and his sister a place on the Kindertransport that was arranged for those children who had been involved in the forced expulsion form Germany. They travelled to England and went to live with foster parents in Coventry. They went first to Krakow by train, and then to Warsaw and Gdynia where they boarded a ship. Because it was a Friday they boarded the ship early and had a Sabbath evening service before they sailed. The journey took them through the Kiel Canal into the River Elbe and then across the North Sea to London. They were met there by their new foster-mother and arrived in Coventry by train in the early evening.

Martin describes being anxious and very much afraid at making a journey into the unknown without his mother at the age of eight. He was unable to speak English and the people around him did not speak either German or Yiddish so he was unable to talk to people. He also had to content with the cultural differences between a boy from an orthodox Jewish household and English working class people who had a completely different set of values. Martin stayed with his sister but they both reacted differently to the extent that they could hardly communicate with each other which added to the difficultly of settling into an unfamiliar environment.

After a week or two in England Martin was sent to the local school, though he was only there for a couple of weeks before the school broke up for the summer holiday. During the holiday the war broke out so the start of the next term was delayed until adequate air raid shelters had been built in part of the school hall and the playground had been converted into an ambulance station. During the holiday Martin was able to learn a little English. Once back at school he was put into a group of younger children, but picked English up relatively quickly so that after a few months he was moved into a class of boys of his own age. Martin didn't experience any anti-Semitism in school, though he did meet with some outside of school.

In the autumn of 1940 England began to experience air raids on the civilian population. Of the many air raids on Coventry, the one on 14 November 1940 was the biggest. Martin and his foster family hid in a small pantry under the stairs, where he and his sister were very frightened by his foster-parents' aggressive and dangerous dog. The house lost its doors and windows during the raid and suffered structural damage. Following each air raid there was no gas, electricity or water for several weeks and a danger of typhoid fever due to leaking water and sewage pipes.

Martin's mother escaped Poland on a temporary visa to France. She was able to survive, but after the trauma that Martin had experienced he was not subsequently able to rebuild his relationship with her. Of his relatives in Poland, none survive. Martin's family page in the Book of Remembrance at the Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Community Centre lists 22 people.